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DEPARTMENT FOR TASK FORCE TFX001

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SUBJECT: TFX001: ASIAN TSUNAMI: IRELAND INFORMATION

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1. Two Irish citizens are presumed dead in Thailand (Phuket and Phi Phi), and roughly 50 Irish who were believed to be in the areas affected by the December 26 Asian tsunami are unaccounted for, according to Thomas Brady, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Principal Officer for Consular Operations. On December 29, Brady told Post that Irish efforts were focused on Thailand, the most popular Irish tourist destination among the locations struck by the tsunami. Brady said that the DFA was making steady progress

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identifying Irish survivors of the disaster, but that communications difficulties and limited consular registers at the few Irish embassies in the region were hampering DFA efforts. Irish Ambassador to Malaysia, Dan Mulhall, who has responsibility for Thailand, is now in Phuket and has confirmed that local hospitals treated 15 Irish citizens for injuries. The Irish Deputy Chief of Mission in New Delhi, Pat Byrne, has arrived on Sri Lanka's coast, where about 20 Irish citizens remain unaccounted for. Brady noted that DFA hot lines had received roughly 1,000 calls from persons seeking information on Irish citizens, although in most cases the callers could not confirm that the citizens in question had been in the affected areas. He added that the GOI had not made special provisions with airlines to transport Irish citizens home.

2. The GOI has pledged euro 2 million to relief efforts, noted Brady. The Development Corporation Ireland (DCI), the aid agency within the DFA, will channel these funds principally to the international Red Cross. The Irish Red Cross and Trocaire, a development assistance NGO established by the Irish Catholic Church, have each pledged euro 100,000 for emergency aid. Trocaire said it would direct its contributions to sister organizations in India and Sri Lanka. Unicef Ireland has also pledged euro 150,000. The Church of Ireland and the Irish Catholic Church intend to take up special donations for disaster areas during January 9 services.
BENTON